**Book review (Primary)**

***Fast Forward series – Level 9***

Publisher: Nelson Cengage Learning

[www.nelsonprimary.com.au](http://www.nelsonprimary.com.au)

Cost: Individual titles can be purchased however sets are available as follows:

* *Fast Forward Instructional Reading Pack* Level 9: 10 titles and Teacher’s Guide: $200
* *Fast Forward Interactive CD* Levels 6-11: $195
* *Fast Forward Independent Texts* Levels 6-11: Boxed set with audio CD: $300.

Reviewer: Dianne Travers, Footscray North Primary School.

For the past ten years, since acquiring my TESOL qualification, I have taught LBOTE students as a specialist ESL teacher in a primary setting. Prior to this for the previous twenty years I have taught LBOTE students in the mainstream. During these years I have searched for texts that are of high interest but supportive for students acquiring English. I can highly recommend Nelson Cengage’s *Fast Forward.*

I received Level 9. The pack consisted of 10 books (6 factual and 4 fiction). Each book has an audio CD. There is also a teacher’s guide and a CD-ROM containing all the activities and assessment for the level plus 7 pro formats designed to assist with planning and graphing. The books were designed for the middle years.

*Fast Forward* presents the students with a variety of text types and their corresponding grammatical features. In Level 9 the test types are narrative and report. The fiction books contained story lines that were of interest to both boys and girls. The language structures and pictures support second language learners and the small novel format enhanced students’ self esteem because they could read and understand a novel. The books range from 16 to 24 pages allowing students to feel a sense of achievement at having read a whole book in one reading session. This is important for students who are acquiring English and see their peers reading novels in the mainstream. There are comprehensive assessment tasks to enable teachers to identify whether students are reading at his or her instructional level. The new vocabulary is reinforced throughout the text and succeeding texts. Unlike levelled reading for younger students *Fast Forward* introduces grammatical structures like complex sentences and contractions at the earliest levels; this supported the students in my groups who were beginning to use more sophisticated oral language and were reading at a lower level than their peers. The students were very interested in the factual books. They cover topics that are of interest to students in the middle years. The texts are set out in an easy to read format and the photos are vibrant and contemporary. The children borrowed the books to take home and played the CDs. An 8 year old boy recently arrived from India said, “I liked the books about cars because I really, really like cars.” He went on to describe what he had read.

The Interactive CD was easy to use and assisted with reinforcing vocabulary and developing comprehension. Finally I can highly recommend *Fast Forward* as a valuable resource for TESOL teachers.

\*Exert taken from VATME News, August 2009 – Victorian Association of TESOL and Multicultural Education.